

Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Challenges of the African Military in Peacekeeping Missions in Africa

by

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**CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN MILITARY IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS IN
AFRICA**

by

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ABSTRACT

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This SRP will highlight the challenges the African military contingents faced when preparing and deployed in peacekeeping missions in Africa. The paper will in the same vein cover the main causes attributed to the difficulties and the perpetual dependency on assistance from the developed world. The overall objective is to analyze the effects of the poor African economies on the capabilities of the peacekeepers. This will basically relate to the current financial and logistical capacity of most African countries. Finally the paper will have conclusions and recommendations to enhance the capacity and performance of African peacekeepers in the United Nations and African Union missions.

CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN MILITARY IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS IN AFRICA

The aim of this paper is to highlight the notable challenges encountered by the African peacekeepers in the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) missions in Africa. The paper will also partly cover common challenges to all peacekeepers world over and make conclusions and recommendations on the way forward in peacekeeping operations in Africa. African nations face economic challenges that impact on their capability to support peacekeeping operations. Due to poor economies, technology, equipment and sustainability the African nations depended on the developed world. Efforts by regional economic communities to develop African economies had its' own operational problems. However with the assistance of the developed world to empower regional groupings there are positive results on the way forward. The establishment of peacekeeping training centers has increased the capability of the most African military forces. Despite all the external assistance African nations still depend on foreign aid particularly in technology and equipment. The UN monetary reimbursement helps the troop contributing countries to mitigate their financial constraints on the military.

The Operational Environment

The operational environment in the host countries where the African peacekeepers deployed was hostile. The opposing parties to the conflict despite signing the cease fire agreement continued the armed combat. The peacekeepers were usually inducted in the UN and AU missions under chapter VI but later adjusted to chapter VII because of the escalation of armed combat. Chapter VI had strict rules on the use of force as the peacekeepers were more of observers and monitors of the security

situation. Whereas chapter VII gave some latitude to peacekeepers to use force in self defense and defense of the mandate.

The political atmosphere in host countries created challenges to peacekeepers because of lack of consent and insincerity on treaties by the warring parties. The host nation either independently or together with the opposing forces resisted the intervention of peacekeepers. In missions like Somalia and Sudan the UN and AU encountered armed reaction from the host nations and rebel groups who constantly attacked peacekeepers. The regime in Sudan further contemplated the withdrawal of all peacekeepers and close of the mission. The demands by Sudan became strong when their leader was indicted for war crimes by the international court of justice. The warring parties had also imposed restrictions on movement and operations of the peacekeepers. Peacekeepers camps and convoys were attacked or ambushed with impunity by the rebels.

African countries are highly sensitive to their culture, religious beliefs and gender. Peacekeepers were expected to observe this sensitivity to prevent provoking disrespect and attracted hostile reactions. The peacekeepers when dealing with some disputes in their area of responsibility had to comply with restrictions. Arbitration over disputes involved the local leadership, the chiefs and elders in the area of concern. Some individual peacekeepers that flouted the cultural norms were relocated or withdrawn from the mission. The local cultural penalty for such infringement was costly and damaging to the reputation of peacekeepers. This experience prompted African military to seriously consider the inclusion of studies on culture and religious beliefs of the host

country. This concern was now part of pre-deployment peacekeeping training syllabus of the African military forces.

Peace keeping missions had become a predominant feature in the trouble torn parts of Africa and the world. Since inception of these missions on the African continent several operational and administrative challenges were encountered by African nations. These difficulties were common to all African peacekeepers and are still in existence. Most African peacekeeping forces were deployed into these missions late and without an effective pre-deployment training. In some cases the forces were launched in the mission with poor equipment and limited logistics. The military equipment and capabilities of the host regime and the rebels were usually above that of the peacekeepers. The outnumbered peacekeepers consequently faced operational difficulties and insecurity in the mission.

Political instability and lack of adherence to the signed peace agreements had always made it difficult for the peacekeepers to operate effectively. The belligerents lacked the political will to end the conflict in a short period. The absence of timely and accurate intelligence had adversely affected the preparedness and reaction of the peacekeepers in volatile situations.

Lack of integrated pre-deployment training created problems of liaison and interoperability in the multinational force. The situation was compounded by the United Nations' reluctance to permit peacekeeping forces to train in the mission area. The diversity approach to command and control and lack of inter-operability of communication systems further complicated matters in the mission.

Generally the economies of all troop contributing countries had a direct impact on how contingents were prepared and equipped respectively. Most countries struggled to meet the standards of training and equipment set by the UN. This being a venture that provided the troops international exposure it was also perceived as a lucrative source of revenue for the Africa countries.

Lack of intelligence on the events in the mission area and the incompatible communication equipment of the contingents made coordination difficult. Use of varying staff procedures by respective contingents further created communication challenges for the African military in the missions. The poor technology on the African military equipment was another problem which diminished the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the African peacekeepers. The rules of engagement to some extent were not very clear for the peacekeepers to decide on how much force to use or not. This dilemma on the use of force tended to confine the peacekeepers to their bases when the situation became hostile. This eventually compelled the peacekeepers to adopt a defensive posture and wait for clear direction even though the security situation demanded a reaction to protect property and lives.

The Economy of African States

The economies of most African states lacked the capacity to effectively support the preparations, sustainment and performance of the African military in the UN and AU missions. More often, the African contingents had deployed in these missions ill prepared and poorly equipped. Missions in Sierra Leone, Sudan and the DR Congo experienced insufficiency in troop strength and poor equipment. Thus the ill preparedness of the peacekeepers led to ineffectiveness in the missions. The UN and AU demanded that military contingents deployed with adequate logistics to sustain

themselves for at least three months. Once deployed in the mission the African peacekeepers strived to operate within their limited resources before the UN and AU takeover the responsibility. Most of the poorly serviced contingent equipment proved difficult to maintain because of lack of spare parts and accessories in the mission. Even the rations and petroleum stores for the mandatory three months self sustenance could not be effectively met by some countries. This deficiency affected the proficiency and effectiveness of the African peacekeepers in the mission. The dependency was evident in the AU mission in Darfur before the UN took over and contingents faced logistics difficulties that impacted on their operational capacity.¹

The effects of poor African economies were not only felt in the missions but were a carryover from respective countries. Constrained government funding for preparations made it hard for peacekeepers to undergo meaningful and realistic training. In view of the poor economies, most African countries had no choice except to turn to external assistance. When countries attempted to go it alone it was at a greater cost to the treasury of their respective economies. The funds allocated for some project in the national budget were diverted to meet the military requirements for peacekeeping. Even under normal circumstances the military budgets of the African countries were drastically cut to accommodate other competing national demands. The reductions in the military budgets were part of the clear testimonies of the lack of financial capacity of the African nations.² This status quo explained the reason why the African military lagged behind in capacity for modern peacekeeping missions. The financial problems of African countries will continue to affect the capabilities of the peacekeepers. The assistance from the developed world had enhanced the capabilities of countries like

Nigeria, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and many others in Africa. The African dependency on external aid is inevitable to empower the African armed forces.³

The initiative by African states to establish regional economic communities such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South African Development Cooperation (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) etc, has not achieved much. The constraint was due to lack of integrated effort of member states to exploit the regional economic potential. Regional blocks lack capacity and sufficient funding because of poor and delayed remittances from member states. Multiple and overlapping membership mainly for strategic and political reasons encouraged most African countries to belong to more than one economic community. This multiplicity of membership that was common in East and Southern Africa caused fragmentation in the economic arena. This fragmentation resulted in reduced regional capacity, inconsistent economic objectives and weak operational mandates. Efforts to establish the free trade areas and customs unions failed because the African countries depended on foreign trade taxes. The taxes were the main source of revenue to finance public expenditure and therefore no African country was prepared to give up. Poor technology in most African states impacted on the regional capacity and inadequate capital investment that resulted in low production. This degenerated into lack of diversification and poor industrial competitiveness. The regional economic communities lacked leadership and will among member states to be the prime mover of the economic initiative.⁴

The African leaders have realized the need to shape the AU on the lines of the European Union to address the continent's economic challenges. This realization has made most African leaders to consider economics as their main interest and focus. With

external financial support and investment the regional groupings hope to increase the African trade to empower respective nations.

The unreliable economies in most African states could not fund the establishment of a defense industry and hence the over dependence on external procurement and assistance. Lack of a defense industry to manufacture affordable military equipment increased the expenditure in the African defense budgets. African countries solely relied on foreign aid and purchased their military requirements abroad at great cost with added maintenance costs. The assured way forward is to strengthen the regional economic communities and enhance integration of member countries. The regions must have leadership to spearhead the implementation of principles and objectives of the trade agreements in the regions. ⁵

African Troops Training for Peacekeeping

Training of troops for peacekeeping operations is among the serious challenges most African nations faced. Despite the fact that the UN provided guidelines, most African military never conducted effective training to achieve the benchmarks. Poor training and deficient equipment made the peacekeepers weaker in comparison to the opposing forces. In most situations the host regime and the rebels were rated higher in military skills and equipment than the peacekeepers.⁶ The unsuitable equipment and ill-preparedness of the African peacekeepers made it difficult to maintain the peace and protection of property/civilians. The African economies impacted on training as most countries could not afford to procure even the basic and modern training aids. Troops ended up using improvised training aids with poor logistics and the training usually lacked realism. Most of the required practical training was not fulfilled due to the absence of suitable equipment and logistics. In the Democratic Republic of Congo

(DRC) contingents from Africa were not efficient due to poor preparations e.g. limited knowledge of culture and language, and lack of driver's license for staff officers and observers.

Modern peacekeeping missions demanded high troop mobility for quick reaction and protection. The need for increased mobility, protection and speed implied the inclusion of the mechanized force in the task organization of peacekeepers. This requirement compelled troop contributing nations to procure armored personnel carriers (APCs) to meet the UN contingent configuration. The result was that some troops underwent a dramatic switch to mechanized doctrines within a short period and did not immediately attain proficiency. Coupled with problems of logistics this short mechanized training was ineffective to transform troops into masters of own equipment and tactical drills. This development affected among other nations the Zambian contingent that was hastily trained on newly acquired equipment before deployment in Sudan (UNAMIS). The incompetent crews faced numerous technical problems and it took time to master the equipment in the mission. The situation took time to improve because military training in the mission was prohibited. The UN inspectors and assessment teams assigned to confirm the preparedness of contingents before deployment in the mission were not thorough. Most African military equipment deficiencies were overlooked by the inspectors. Consequences of such poor assessments surfaced in the mission and raised doubts about the capabilities of the African military.

Each member state had its unique military doctrine based on their respective former colonial powers and therefore trained differently. This difference in doctrine

impacted on peacekeeping training in the respective member states and created varying operating standards in contingents. The training syllabus from UN provided common guidelines but each African military related to it differently resulting in varying operational efficiency. Depending on the respective doctrine and experience the African military concentrated on the conventional training. The rebels in the missions applied irregular methods of operations that the peacekeepers were not prepared for. This explained the reason why some contingents were more proactive and others passive in the conduct of peacekeeping operations. Not all the African military had the necessary expertise and materials to formulate and run an effective peace support operations training. Lack of qualified trainers meant the absence of specialized knowledge and skills required for competence and effectiveness in peacekeeping operations.

The UN training materials given to the African military in the past were too generic and could not sufficiently address the main operational challenges. These modules further failed to relate to the numerous complex and multifaceted problems in the multidimensional peacekeeping operations. In most missions in Africa the situation was marred with the level of hostilities that peacekeepers were not prepared for. Such unpreparedness was due to poor training that created problems for peacekeepers to adapt to hostile situations. The UN training modules that most African countries adhered to failed to cover dynamic operational threats in the mission where the peacekeepers deployed.

The integrated training was not addressed and where attempts were made it only revealed several operational and logistical shortfalls. The South African Development Cooperation (SADC) Brigade training experience in South Africa provided a case study

on logistics and equipment deficiency in the African military. The distinct African military doctrines, training approach and equipment added to the complexity of the integrated training. The military doctrines of African countries were based on their former colonial masters. The diverse military equipment particularly the communication radios of respective contingents made interoperability difficult. Though efforts are in place to improve the situation much remained to be done to achieve the desired professional competence and effectiveness. However some African countries with qualified peace support trainers like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa etc. had the capacity to conduct effective peace support training. The African countries with such capability usually had well prepared and equipped troops for peacekeeping operations.⁷

The UN and AU remittances to the troop contributing countries made a remarkable financial difference to the African military. These funds though not enough mitigated the burden on national budgets of African countries. The budget relief and further gains were the reason most African countries were encouraged to participate in peacekeeping. Such financial advantages inticed the African countries including those with suspect peacekeeping capacity to volunteer to participate. The monetary attraction tended to invite the African military based more on quantity rather than quality that affected the performance of African peacekeepers. The situation is gradually improving because of the assistance from the developed world to regional peace support training.

The problem of producing qualified trainers is being addressed by the established regional peace support training programs, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) international programs. These training programs are constantly running

to increase capacity of the African military to effectively train their own troops. So far many African countries have benefitted from the peace support training programs run independently or jointly with ACOTA and gpoi and other nations.⁸ Canada was among the other nations providing training and equipment to enhance the African peacekeeping capability. The mission in Darfur benefitted from the Canadian donation of the armored personnel carriers and troop training.⁹

Conduct of the peacekeepers in the mission is now covered in training to address and mitigate indiscipline. Some peacekeepers in African contingents were involved in immoral behavior and illegal activities especially in the DRC. Following serious concerns from the UN, the African TCCs have stepped up training with much emphasis on exemplary conduct of peacekeepers in the missions. The external assistance in training was influencing improvement in the general performance and conduct of the African peacekeepers. The African military has become more professional in peacekeeping operations compared to the past records.¹⁰ Therefore the need to improve the capacity of the African military for peacekeeping operations is desirable. The AU member states created the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) program to mitigate peacekeeping challenges. This initiative enabled the establishment of the African regional forces for peacekeeping.¹¹ Considering also the potential for conflicts the developed world must continue to strengthen the African armed forces. A number of forums under the UN/AU had discussed the training needs of the African military. The USA and other cooperating countries were urged to take the lead in training and equipping the African military for peacekeeping.¹²

Military Equipment of African Peacekeepers

From inception the African contingents in the multinational peacekeeping missions inducted with different equipment between them. This diversity in equipment and levels of reliability precluded force cohesion in the UN or AU mission. The poor economies in some of the African nations impacted on the maintenance of military equipment. Most African military had second rate equipment which was either obsolete and unsuitable for modern peacekeeping operations. Lack of essential personal equipment and armored APCs/attack helicopters seriously undermined the capabilities of the African military. Maintenance of old equipment was a daunting task due to scarcity of spare parts. The sourcing of such spare parts became more difficult when the equipment was no longer in production with the manufacturers. When deployed in the mission the bulk of the old equipment remained idle and unreliable due to poor serviceability. The African military financial position cannot afford equipment with the advanced technology for modern peacekeeping operations. The dependency on military industries abroad and external assistance from the developed countries will continue for a long time. Poor and unreliable military equipment of the African forces will continue to affect their efficiency and effectiveness in the missions.¹³

The African nations inducted troops in the mission with the assistance of the UN because they had no airlift capability. In most missions the host regime and the rebels were better equipped and outnumbered the peacekeepers. The inferiority in equipment and strength of the peacekeeping force was a serious challenge to the African military. As long as nothing was done to modernize equipment the peacekeepers will always find it difficult to function effectively. Assistance from the developed countries was the

solution to the acquisition of modern technology and equipment to improve capacity of the African military.¹⁴

The UN reimbursements and assistance from developed countries have enabled most African countries to procure modern equipment. The impact of the UN reimbursements depended on the quality and technology on the deployed equipment of a troop contributing country. However for the African countries with poor equipment and capacity the UN remittances made little difference to change their position. African countries with poor economies will continue to struggle to find funds to purchase suitable military equipment for peacekeeping operations. The modern equipment and its' maintenance requirements were beyond the African military. This situation on equipment increases the African reliance on the developed world that must timely assist.¹⁵

African countries who have contributed aviation equipment like helicopters are only reimbursed on the rule of the blade hours flown. This rule has been viewed to be unsuitable and a frustration to the owners of the equipment. The African countries affected would like the UN to review the current rule and devise better reimbursement criteria. Similarly the demands to improve the reimbursements on all contingent owned equipment is an ongoing exercise. Following the recall of the Indian helicopter battalion from DRC the mission was disparate for helicopters. Despite the UN authorizing deployment of more helicopters particularly from Angola the situation remained problematic. South Africa had only provided one helicopter to service the whole mission.¹⁶

The variance in African military equipment and doctrine created interoperability problems in the multinational operations. Command and communication difficulties were experienced as a result of this diversity in equipment.¹⁷

Technology

The technology on most African equipment was generally backward in this modern world. The efficiency and effectiveness of any military force is based on advanced technology and sound training. This higher technology was beyond the capacity of the African nations due to the poor economy and generally the low levels of advancement. Most African military train their troops on the substandard equipment with outdated technology. Due to lack of the financial capacity most African countries had depended largely on external assistance. The involvement of outside help from the East or west and any other source was done at a premium. This costly assistance was often economically prohibitive to most African nations. The attempts by African countries to mitigate the financial burden resulted in the procurement of old or upgraded equipment. Hence, African nations with relative economies only afforded to acquire equipment with moderate technology that made little difference. The trend of settling for second rate equipment had become the trend due to financial constraints. The incessant bad state of the African military equipment was a serious weakness of the African military peacekeepers. The lack of African capacity to establish own defense industry largely contributed to the ever increasing reliance on external assistance.¹⁸

The African continent has great potential to develop the technology to facilitate economic development. To exploit the potential it required the African defense industry cooperation and governments' commitment to development and economic growth. Lack of such commitment will perpetuate the trend of having ill-trained and poorly

equipped African peacekeepers. Currently African peacekeepers are deployed in dangerous environment in Somalia, Darfur (Sudan) and DRC. The aforementioned were complex missions that required well trained troops, adequate logistic support and suitable equipment. Africa as a continent has the potential in technology, expertise and production capabilities to meet the demands. What remains to be achieved and facilitate this process of development is to have able leadership. An affordable home bred technology is possible if African statesmen pulled in one direction politically and economically. Africa has the least developed industry with limited and low quality exports to the world. The lack of constructive industrial policies and investment into the infrastructure downplayed efforts for development. Human capacity building in health, education and training was low and affected the research institutions. Finances were also another hindrance to promoting industrial development in Africa. The start point for Africa is to formulate strong industrial policy at national, regional and continental level. This should also embrace regional economic integration and support for African industrialization.¹⁹

Sustainability Challenges of the African Military

Sustenance of the contingents of peacekeepers in UN and AU missions had is a serious challenge to all African nations. The African peacekeepers were required to deploy with self sustenance logistics for three months before the UN or AU took over the responsibilities. This mandatory condition outstretched the limited financial capacities of most African nations. Some African contingents deployed with insufficient logistics and encountered difficulties in administration during the intervening period. This problem of logistics consequently affected the maintenance of combat/logistics vehicles and the general administration of troops. The limited resources and finances

contingents deployed with could not meet the operational demands in the mission. Later when the UN/AU reimbursements were made to TCCs the funds cushioned the impact on the administration in the mission. Peacekeeping operations are now viewed by African nations as a means to earn foreign exchange. These gains were also used to improve the administration of troops back home in their respective countries. The value of reimbursements from UN depended on the quality of contingent owned equipment (COE). The funds were not sufficient to cover the range of equipment requirements for peacekeeping operations. However the financial gains encouraged the African nations that took the risk to induct poorly prepared troops in the mission. The troops also deployed with poor equipment and inadequate logistics. The African poor economies were among the major reasons why most contingents of peacekeepers were ineffective in the missions.²⁰

The lack of an effective sustenance capability left most African countries more dependent on external assistance from the developed nations. The developed countries occasionally intervened to help African nations on a voluntary basis to cover the shortfalls in equipment and logistics. The poor capacity for troop sustenance in peacekeeping missions was a significant challenge to the African military. The lack of resources, logistics and finances were the major factors that affected African armed forces. As long as the situation on capacity remained unchanged there will be the need for more assistance from the developed world.²¹

Intelligence and Information in Peacekeeping Missions

All contingents of peacekeepers not only in Africa but worldwide were usually availed some background information and current situation in the mission. However this information was insufficient to cover the critical areas of the security threats in the

mission. Lack of detailed information about particular challenges in operations and the weather effects became sudden challenges to the peacekeepers worldwide. Latest and timely intelligence on the intentions and activities of the warring forces in the mission was rare. This shortfall in intelligence resulted in peacekeepers' patrols and convoys being ambushed or engaged in sudden encounters with the rebels. Some peacekeepers were killed, injured or captured by the rebels in such circumstances. The attacks on peacekeepers were common in the DRC and Sudan (Darfur region). Under such rebel attacks besides killing peacekeepers, equipment was either damaged or captured. The absence of timely and accurate intelligence in the mission impacted on decisions made by military commanders. The military commanders tended to underestimate the security situation in their areas of responsibility (AOR). The peacekeepers moved in independent convoys or as escorts on unclear orders devoid of details about the security threats en route.²²

This cardinal intelligence component of peacekeeping operations was not given its due attention by the UN and AU. The notion and conviction that the peacekeepers were expected to portray a non-aggressive stance discouraged the proactive approach to intelligence. This argument did not tie in well with the need for self defense and protection of mission property and the civilians. The UN & AU on one side appeared to have limited capacity to gather and analyze intelligence required for peacekeeping operations. The missions lacked the advanced surveillance technology and experts. Remote sensing equipment for long range observation and monitoring over vast fields was not available with the peacekeepers. Even basic infra-red viewing gadgets were missing on helmets of peacekeepers to increase the effectiveness of night vision. As a

result of this problem of equipment, night patrols were not conducted. It was during the night when the opposing forces largely violated the ceasefire agreement and moved their weapons/contrabands to their strong holds.²³

The problems of intelligence in the missions required the UN & AU to be proactive and acquire advanced technology for surveillance. The new technology will enhance access to intelligence and information in the mission. The safety of peacekeepers will greatly improve and facilitate timely detection of security threats in the mission. The need to improve the UN & AU capacity to acquire intelligence must be extended to all the military contingents and security entities in the mission. Some surveillance and intelligence equipment must be organic to the contingents and added facilities to be provided by missions. The intelligence effort must be effective at the tactical level where it is currently lacking in the missions.²⁴

The requirement for intelligence was evident in the UN mission in the Congo in the early nineteen sixties (1960s) in the Congo mission. The UN reputation was considered to be at stake if discovered by the host nation of involvement in intelligence operations. This fear undermined the importance of intelligence and affected the performance of peacekeepers. The Secretary General of the UN then, Hammarskjöld disallowed the proposal to establish an intelligence branch. The restrictions on intelligence were maintained at the expense of effective operations. When the need for intelligence became inevitable in the Congo, the UN decided to established an information branch. This branch was assigned the functions of enhancing security and peacekeeping operations. Even the establishment of this branch failed to meet demands for intelligence and revealed weaknesses in the branch. To retain the integrity

of the UN and operate within the law to avoid suspicions from the host country naturally imposed limitations on intelligence collection. However the UN would do a great service to the field of intelligence by establishing an extensive and modern intelligence gathering network. This network in all missions should roll down to the tactical level where the deficiency in intelligence is significant and disparate.²⁵

Command and Control in Peacekeeping Operations

The vast and wide spread deployment of peacekeepers in complex mission environments increased the demands for efficient command and control. Peacekeepers encountered determined and more sophisticated rebels and host regimes that frustrated their mission efforts. The responsibilities of the peacekeepers to protect the civilians and deter the rebel attacks proved difficult because of the operational restrictions. The military tasks were further complicated by the dispersion of UN & AU forces across the vast operational areas. The inadequate infrastructure and lack of critical force enablers like attack-helicopters just compounded the operational abilities of peacekeepers. The upward spiraling of high risk operations required unprecedented levels of political guidance, planning and coordination to minimize the threats to personnel.²⁶

The UN command and control based on flexibility and civilian leadership had historically served peacekeeping missions well. The gap between the ambitious mandates and the limited military capacities in the mission created new problems in the field and at the headquarters. Troop contributing nations expressed dissatisfaction on the lack of transparency by the UN secretariat and the way the mission mandates were implemented. Member states argued that the UN should discard the mission-based model of command and control in favor of a stronger operational headquarters. The unfamiliar North Atlantic Treaty Organization(NATO) and the European Union(EU) control

arrangements and procedures created problems of coordination among African contingents. Most African contingents had trained on different models that were not compatible with NATO and EU procedures. The establishment of regional peace support training centers provided the opportunity to address the concerns on procedures. Training of the senior leadership in peacekeeping operations is one area that requires serious attention to enhance efficiency. Most senior military officers and civilians were not conversant with the organization and complexity of UN and AU missions. The solution lies in the established regional training centers to upgrade their programs and accommodate the senior leadership. Most peace support training centers like in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya etc. have already taken up the challenge to train senior leaders. There are ongoing programs in most African states by ACOTA, GPOI and other countries like Canada, UK, France, Germany etc.²⁷

In the field the Head of Mission UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) exercised operational authority over all aspects of the mission including the military, the police and civilian component. The military force commander executes operational control of the force provided by the TCCs. The member nations and the troops deployed have been concerned that the SRSG has overstepped his authorities and exercised undue political control over the conduct of the military operations. The overstretched deployments of African contingents coupled with several tasks in a decentralized command system made control difficult. The UN & AU command and control got overloaded and strained with many multinational challenges and operational tasks. The situation on command and control worsened in a more complex operational environment. Complex missions usually demanded peace

enforcement to restore failed peace agreements. The best examples of such military experiences were in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and DR Congo which required enforcement of failed peace agreements. The situation in 1992 in Somalia got out of hand and the peacekeepers were on the ground outnumbered by the warring forces. Having no government in place the war lords took advantage to escalate the armed conflict and attacked the peacekeepers. A similar situation broke out in the DR Congo where again the peacekeepers were numerically overwhelmed by the opposing forces. The situation in DRC resulted in escalated armed conflict, banditry activities and massive abuse of human rights by the belligerents.²⁸

The chains of command of some African contingents tended to assert themselves and influenced decisions of some Force Commanders. Frictions developed between the civilian leadership of the mission or at UN headquarters in New York over the unclear mandates. The UN leadership had problems to agree on the correct interpretation of a mandate for particular mission. In some cases member states imposed restrictions on their contingents with the full knowledge of the UN headquarters. Such member nations defined and gave limitations on where their contingents deployed and which operational tasks they undertook. Contingents gave limitations of their participation because of the unclear interpretation of the rules of engagement. This attitude of some African military affected the way in which the UN dealt with the operational and administrative concerns in the mission. Some countries particularly from the Arab world and Asia objected to the deployment of their troops in certain operational areas in the mission and were tolerated. Despite the Operation Orders from the Force Commander some contingents found loop holes to have their

concerns heard. Other nations had no choice but to adhere to what the UN Force Headquarters decided without question. However each nation reserved the right to commit their troops or not as participation in peacekeeping operations was voluntary.²⁹

Use of Force in Peacekeeping Campaigns

The challenges of peacekeeping operations in the 21st century changed the strategic environment in all the world missions. The epoch of peacekeeping in Africa and the world was characterized by military resistance by the host regime and the rebels. The rebel attacks against the peacekeepers and civilians were common place in all peacekeeping missions. African contingents were now deployed mostly under chapter VII of the UN charter which authorized the peacekeepers to use force. This force could only be applied in self defense and protection of civilians, UN & AU property in the mission. African contingents were usually in a dilemma to determine the necessary level of force to apply in intensified threats. This level of force when weighed against the consequences on the overall mission objectives, tended to restrain African peacekeepers from being proactive and forceful. It's therefore imperative that rules of engagement (ROE) must be explicit to the peacekeepers and must suit the mission. The unsuitability of the ROE in the mission created repeated circumstances where peacekeepers lacked in both capacity and mandate. Lack of capacity and mandate made the African military fall short of a credible force that could deter or react effectively to the security threats in the mission.³⁰

Lack of adequate ROE and faulty mandates contributed to the African peacekeepers' poor reaction to threats and rebel attacks. This development resulted in troops of African contingents being besieged and captured by the rebels as was the case in Sierra-Leone, Somalia and DR Congo missions. The UN was usually able to

assess but slow to react to the security situation in the mission until peacekeepers and civilians were persistently attacked. The delayed decisions to transit from chapter VI to VII made the situation to degenerate into unprecedented lawlessness. This weakness in mandates created room for wide spread crimes of rape and murder in the missions like in the DRC and Sudan. The lack of clear mandate and inadequate resources made the African peacekeepers feel unaccountable to the protection of civilians. The traditional military training doctrines of African contingents were centered on the defense of territories. The protection aspect of individual human beings was not a priority during such training. As a result of this training indoctrination of African peacekeepers, they felt that it was not their core responsibility to protect the civilians. This unfortunate perception increased the vulnerability of the civilians to attacks and abuse of their human rights by the opposing forces. There was also lack of the global effort and serious security measures within the missions to protect the civilians. In the worst scenario civilians were deliberately targeted by the opposing forces that also blocked humanitarian assistance to the needy in the mission.³¹

The UN must endeavor to negotiate with the warring parties for a robust mandate and not like in Somalia where it is was fragile.³² The use of military force must be clearly stated but prudently balanced with the concept of non use of force except in self defense and protection of civilian lives and UN property.³³

Maintenance of Impartiality in a Peacekeeping Mission

The volatile security situation in the African and the world missions precluded a smooth transition to peace. Under normal conditions the African peacekeepers inducted in missions after the UN & AU were granted the consent by the belligerents. When the security environment was stable the African military conducted the traditional

peacekeeping operations of monitoring the situation. The military deployed as an inter-positional force or unarmed observer force to monitor the peace, report and investigate violations of the agreement. When the security situation was hostile because of violation of the cease-fire agreement, peace enforcement became the norm of UN/AU operations. This was when the use of military force or threat of its use authorized by UN/AU was applicable to restore peace between the warring factions. The belligerents will not have all agreed to the UN/AU intervention and were engaged in combat activities. The rebel movement in Liberia refused to accept the Economic Community of Western states Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) mandate. The mandate under the AU was later changed into Chapter VII for peace enforcement mission. The refusal of anyone of the opposing forces to recognize the UN/AU mandate worsened the crisis and dragged the peacekeepers into armed conflict. In the missions like UNAMIS (Sudan) and MONUAC (DRC) all belligerents broke the comprehensive peace agreement and resumed the armed conflict. In such unpredictable security situation the peacekeepers were confronted with tempting challenges to remain impartial in the conflict. When the peacekeepers intervened in the conflict using force they were accused of being biased by either one or more of the opposing forces. The belligerents always appeared poised for prolonged negotiations and took advantage of the actions of peacekeepers to make false claims biasness in the mission. The belligerents always felt that the peacekeepers lost their impartiality by any operational conduct perceived to favor one or other factions in the conflict. African peacekeepers were usually involved in tricky tasks for the military like cease-fire negotiations and mediations with the belligerents. When peacekeepers were engulfed in direct negotiations with some

opposing force they were accused of being biased in the conflict.³⁴ This misconception of biasness was common in missions like in Sudan and the DRC where several rebel groups are in conflict. At this point of mistrust the peacekeepers were considered to have lost the perceived impartiality and mandate to operate in the mission. The perception of neutrality in the traditional peacekeeping or peace-enforcement posed a serious challenge to peacekeepers in the world. Based on such misconception of the peacekeepers' impartiality the rebels and the host regime imposed unreasonable operational restrictions. This was common in Sudan where at some stage the regime even demanded to close the mission and be left alone to resolve the conflict.³⁵

Conclusion

The challenges which the African military experienced in the missions are still being encountered in the current deployments. Among the main root causes of the African challenges in peacekeeping operations is the economy of individual countries. The poor economies and low technology capacity of most African nations naturally affected how the African military were inadequately. The meager resources hampered the desires of the African military to be well equipped and effective in the modern peacekeeping operations. The advanced technology and combat characteristics of the required military equipment for modern peacekeeping operations was beyond the reach of the African nations. The quality and state of military equipment of the African military was questionable due to lack of serious maintenance schedules. The problems of equipment maintenance worsened in the missions as every effort was dependent on resources from home country with limited logistics..

When the peacekeepers were deployed in the mission they mainly relied on the initial and inadequate basic information about the situation in the mission. Current

information or intelligence was not available in the missions. The absence of current intelligence affected the planning and preparedness of the peacekeepers for security threats and other eventualities in the mission. In the same vein it also affected decisions of commanders that were made on inaccurate/unconfirmed information or intelligence.

Command and control was made difficult by the increase in size of the forces deployed and the complexity of the mission environment. The overstretched deployments of forces across vast territories without proper infrastructure for command and control, and oversight mechanisms weakened the system. The enlarging gap between ambitious mandates and the African limited capabilities created demands for hard decisions on the use of force. The SRSG's consent on all key military decisions was considered unnecessary military decentralization and political control over the conduct of military operations in the mission. Some contingents put restrictions and decided what operations to conduct in the mission without any disciplinary measures taken by the UN headquarters. The situation on command and control became more complicated when the mandate and rules of engagement were not clear and failed to relate to the existing security environment. The absence of a clear mandate and the rules of engagement made peacekeepers vulnerable to activities in the mission which were considered by the belligerents as a departure from impartiality. Such unfortunate developments and other related setbacks were part of the contributory factors to the prolonged peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Recommendations

The developed world led by the USA should increase the financial, material and equipment support to the regional military organizations like ECOWAS, SADC and the EAC. This assistance should empower the regional groupings and enable them to

contain political and military threats in their respective regions. In the long run attain the desired security and political stability to facilitate a competitive commerce environment extending beyond the regions and the African continent.

The African regional organizations should consider actualizing the standardization and integration of member states military training for peace support operations within their regions. Military equipment should also be standardized according to the mutually agreed requirements of each region. The standards should meet the UN benchmarks. The uniformity in equipment will facilitate interoperability, enhanced coordination and effectiveness of the regional peacekeeping forces.

The UN and AU must always ensure that before the peacekeepers are committed to any peace support operations the mandate and the rules of engagement are explicit, and should relate to the current security environment in the mission. The SRSG in any given mission should on advice from the Force Commander not hesitate or delay to adjust the ROE from Chapter VI to VII. Over decentralization of command and overstretched deployments due to insufficient number of troops on the ground must be avoided. The UN and AU must not rush to induct troops in the mission before they are certain of the preparedness and availability of number of troops required. Equally the troop contributing countries who had pledged to participate should maintain their trust.

The developed world should discourage particular countries or the military being considered for peace support training assistance away from the regional efforts. The idea must promote integrated training to attain even standards of professionalism, efficiency and operational effectiveness. This will help to strategically attain the balance

of power and capabilities in the African regions and serve as a strategic deterrence to conflicts.

The African states must work together closely on security policies and pull resources at regional and continental levels. The available potential in technology, expertise and production capacity must be harnessed to establish defense and civil industries. Peacekeeping must become a regional and continental project where the states coordinate, procure and manufacture equipment locally. This approach will be more financially viable and foster multilateral cooperation to local economies. It will also provide greater sustenance capacity for African states and the AU at large. This will build and increase the African capacity to effectively deal with the economic and security threats on the continent. Finally this development will ensure the balance of military power in the regions and strategically deter conflicts on the continent.

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